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SOURCE Le Figaro.TWO ARTICLES BY SOUVERAINE ON STALIN'S SUCCESSOR

[Comment: This report presents the complete text of two
 articles on Stalin's successor, written by Boris Souveraine, which
 appeared in the Paris daily Le Figaro on 6 and 9 March 1953.
 Souveraine is a well-known student of Soviet affairs and author
 of the biography Stalin.]

AFTER STALIN -- Paris, Le Figaro, 6 Mar 53

In passing from the scene, Stalin leaves a political situation little in-
 telligible to the Western world. Soviet realities do not correspond to any
 existing practice outside the USSR, with the exception perhaps of China, where
 gradually a situation somewhat similar is being created.

Since the disappearance of Lenin and of Lenin's Politburo, supreme power
 has been exercised at Moscow by the party Secretariat. Hence the popular ex-
 pression "dictatorship of the Secretariat" -- an ironic comment on the theo-
 retical accession to power of the proletariat. However, there exists, or there
 existed until the beginning of this month, a secretariat within the Secre-
 tariat -- Stalin's secretariat.

This personal secretariat of Stalin's, secret and omnipotent, existing
 apart from all other institutions, receives little attention in the West.
 However, it is the real power above all other powers, or so it was during Sta-
 lin's lifetime. Henceforth, what will it be without Stalin?

The party Secretariat, without Stalin, is made up at present of nine mem-
 bers headed by Malenkov. It will tend naturally to recoup the prerogatives
 which Stalin's secretariat gradually assumed. Malenkov's signature, next to
 that of Stalin on the bottom of official documents, leaves no doubt as to his
 importance. However, all the ink spilled on this subject is of no help in
 predicting his future.

- 1 -

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As a matter of fact, the idea of "succession" as it has been spread in the West by so many commentaries, is not applicable to Soviet conditions, where right and actuality have nothing in common. Before the war Stalin enjoyed arbitrary and unlimited powers without being either Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars or Supreme Commander in Chief. He had himself appointed to these two positions in 1941, not for the flattering reasons which his court biographers give, but because he alone, as secretary-general of the party, could then give undisputed orders.

Now the position and powers of a party secretary-general are not supposed to exist, if one were to believe the party by-laws and the Constitution of the USSR.

No such powers were ever conferred on Stalin, yet he took them. How? as a result of a Politburo decision placing him in the "Collegium" of the Cheka, later the GPU. This unreflected decision soon made Stalin the verti- table chief of the secret police, more powerful than its nominal chief. The combination of the roles of secretary-general and chief of police, together with Stalin's special aptitudes, were to produce the present regime.

Certainly, other favorable conditions, impossible to summarize in a hundred lines, were essential. Among those of particular note was the inability of theoreticians to foresee Stalin's homicidal designs. However, the problem of "succession" is placed in its own peculiar light by the above considerations. Who remembers that Yelena Stasova was party secretary before Stalin? Aleksey Rykov became Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and thus Lenin's true "successor." Stalin killed both of them without bothering about frivolous considerations of succession.

Malenkov's career will depend, therefore, on invisible connections which will be established between the party Secretariat, Stalin's secretariat, and Beriya's police (without Stalin). In addition, one cannot completely ignore the party Presidium, the former Politburo, which was relegated to the background when Stalin killed off almost all of his former colleagues. Under certain conditions the Presidium could become important again.

Regular state institutions, such as the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers, do not enter into the problem, for they are subordinate to party organs in a manner which can hardly be explained by simple formulas. Outside speculation on the dominance of one over the other remains, for the time being, the affair of specialists.

The essential thing for those who study the confused days following Stalin's death is not to linger too long over legal or statutory provisions, nor to become obsessed by the so-called precedent of Lenin's succession. Everything will be determined by the personal relations of the men who now hold the reins of power, men who were commonly known in Moscow, following Lenin's death and the extermination of his colleagues, as "men without biographies."

The names of Poskrebyshev or Dvinskiy, two of Stalin's numerous secretaries, mean no more to the public than do the names of their predecessors, Tovstukha and Bratanovskiy. Few so-called "experts" on Soviet affairs have noticed that Yezhov and Mekhlis, who ruled the secret police and the army with an iron hand, came from Stalin's own secretariat, and that Malenkov was formerly in this secretariat and was under the orders of Poskrebyshev, who became a member of the Central Committee only after the recent party congress.

The "men without biographies" are at work in the shadows and will not behave as did the members of the Politburo, Lenin's body of theorists who put forward nothing but citations from Marx and Lenin in opposition to the upstarts

- 2 -

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

STAT

who had decided to trample over them in order to monopolize power. No one foresaw that after Lenin's death in 1924 Stalin would kill off all his colleagues or, even less, that they would let themselves be dealt with in this manner. And, doubtless, Stalin did not at that time plan the murders which would bring him to the summit. This time there is no reason to suppose that events will take a completely different turn.

However, the heritage of Stalinism and of Stalin's political and police techniques will not come into play solely because of the ambitions and capabilities of his entourage, well-known to be mediocre. Endless prophecies on the rivalry between these "men without biographies" only obscure the historical perspective in which the leaders of the Soviet empire are not the only forces in determining the course of history.

MALENKOV IN POWER -- Paris, Le Figaro, 9 Mar 53

Georgiy Maximilianovich Malenkov, "man without a biography," nevertheless already has his biographer, not to speak of those who without doubt are professionally engaged in this task in the USSR. A Russian Socialist, B. Nikolayevskiy, who is well-acquainted with the subject, has compiled bits of information which add to the pitiful official 15-line entry in the Soviet encyclopedia.

Here again ability to interpret these facts is absolutely necessary. Point one, of essential importance in the Communist Party: Does Malenkov come from a working class background, as has been believed at Moscow and as his plebian manners would lead one to conclude?

Millions of victims of the regime in the USSR have been branded with the infamous tag of "bourgeois," "petit bourgeois," or "noble." Only a few rare privileged persons in high circles can escape the suspicion which by principle is attached to a nonproletarian origin (the majority of peasants are classed in categories more or less bourgeois).

Malenkov's ancestry is never mentioned in official works. Born at Orenburg on the Ural River, Stalin's successor is almost certainly the son of Cossacks and even of well-to-do Cossacks.

For a long time Orenburg was an outpost of Russian colonization, held by the Cossacks against the turbulent Bashkirs and rebel Kirgiz. The inflectional ending of the name Malenkov is typical of local Cossack proper names. In addition, the father's surname, Maximilian, really exceptional in Russia, indicates a family of officers or of functionaries, of which there were many in the city. The family must have been well-off since Georgiy was attending secondary school when the Revolution interrupted his studies.

In the West, all this makes no difference, but in the USSR millions of innocent persons have perished for much less. If Malenkov, burdened by such a handicap, had quarreled with one of his superiors in the secretariat's hierarchy, his number would have been up. However, nothing of this sort disturbed the career of this model Bolshevik.

Point two, very important in his political milieu: Did Malenkov really distinguish himself in the service of the Revolution during the Civil War, as his brief "curriculum vitae" leads one to believe?

The young man would have joined the Red Army in 1919 at the age of 18. Since he was born in January 1902, this means that his army service, at the

- 3 -

RESTRICTED

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earliest, dates from autumn 1919 if one accepts the official version. Now the Red Army defeated the Ataman Dutov in 1918, reoccupied Orenburg in January 1919, and once and for all pushed Kolchak's forces far back into Siberia in March and April

Malenkov, decidedly prudent for his age, knew how to wait patiently until fate turned before joining the victorious camp. Here is a character trait worthy of attention and remembrance -- this adolescent was not fond of taking risks.

Point three, of great importance to everyone: In what way did Malenkov prove himself in the army, point of departure for his astonishing career?

In his job of politrabotnik (surveillant and political instructor), he needed to display no military talents. His role, exclusively political, consisted of spying on suspicious elements, denouncing "traitors," and transmitting orders from above. Clearly, this was the role of an auxiliary member of the Cheka.

Malenkov joined the party only in 1920. He moved very rapidly from a squadron to a regiment, to a brigade, and then to the Turkestan Front, for in this new "time of troubles" advancement came at a dizzy pace for the ne'er-do-wells of his age. The cavalry was used mainly to tame the unmanageable but disarmed population. Thus, Malenkov made his first campaign in the role of policeman in the ranks of the mounted police.

Demobilized in 1922, he entered the Moscow Higher Technical School and became secretary of its party cell. He soon took the next step up the ladder and became secretary of the party organization controlling all Moscow vuzes (higher educational institutions). As such, he participated actively in the merciless "purges" which throughout the various party crises tended to "proletarianize" the youth in school and subsequently provoked a terrible epidemic of suicides.

Here again Malenkov accomplished a police task with the cruel harshness characteristic of all repressions in the USSR. This won him Stalin's confidence, and in 1925 the latter engaged him in his personal secretariat. From here the former Cossack of Orenburg moved upward through the various secretariats to the supreme secretariat.

"There is scarcely an allusion to this personal secretariat of Stalin's in political literature," notes B. Nikolayevskiy (Na Rubezhe, No 5), "and yet if one does not know its history, it is impossible to write the history of Stalin's success. This secretariat was a fundamental nucleus with whose help Stalin was able secretly to take over the party apparatus, a factor which played a decisive role in his struggle against all factions."

Through this super-Cheka, which collected dossiers and memoranda and encouraged denunciations and blackmail, Stalin patiently undertook to "liquidate" all troublemakers with a success that surpassed his own hopes. The young Malenkov was to learn much in such a school.

Having grown up in this environment, he knew its intricacies as no one else could. Over a long period he has been stepping into Stalin's shoes, sharing his confidences acquiring his methods coming out on top throughout contests and complicities. By delegation of powers, he has pulled the strings and levers of the secret police, and will certainly know how to continue to do this without his master. The police are bound to him for he has his own police within their ranks -- Stalin's heritage which has already proved its efficacy.

- 4 -

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If Stalin's secretariat becomes Malenkov's, then the dictatorial legacy will be transmitted in all its fullness and a smooth succession assured. A pyramid of secretariats and of police, of presidiums and councils, will rest heavily on the immense laboring population. The only remaining step is to forge a biography from all the pieces and to edit a "complete works." The Bolsheviks have accomplished many other such miracles.

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- 5 -

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